

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

and the

HAWAII INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
HONOLULU, HAWAII

and the

HONOLULU BOTANIC GARDENS
HONOLULU, HAWAII

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF 'TROPIC CORAL' TALL ERYTHRINA

The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; the Hawaii Institute of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaii; and the Honolulu Botanic Gardens announce the release of Erythrina variegata L. cv. 'Tropic Coral'.

'Tropic Coral' probably originated under cultivation in New Caledonia, as a sport or mutant of the more typical open-branched form of Erythrina variegata. In cultivation it has spread to other tropical and warm-temperate areas, including Australia and southern Florida. 'Tropic Coral' has previously been referred to as Erythrina variegata var. fastigiata, but for nomenclatorial reasons this name is not valid. The fastigate growth form (columnar, with branches all erect) of this cultivar is not known to occur anywhere in the wild. The natural range of Erythrina variegata itself extends from the east coast of Africa, throughout Southeast Asia and Malaysia to Oceania including Fiji, Tahiti and the Marquesas. 'Tropic Coral' was introduced to Hawaii in 1959 as a gift to the Honolulu Botanic Gardens from E.M. Menninger of Florida who obtained the seed from the Botanic Garden in Adelaide, Australia. It was tested in Hawaii under the numbers HA-3853 and F-1029.

'Tropic Coral' is a leguminous tree that grows approximately 25 ft (7.6 m) tall within three years and may ultimately reach heights of 50 to 60 ft (15.2 to 18.3 m) depending on spacing, care, and location. It has an erect or columnar growth form. It has attained the dimensions of 11.5 ft (3.5 m) high by 3.5 ft (1.1 m) wide the first year, under favorable conditions, from unrooted cuttings planted directly in the soil. Leaves are alternate with three broad leaflets, the terminal being the largest. Leaflets are heart-shaped, 3 to 5 in (7.6 to 12.7 cm) wide by 5 to 7 in (12.7 to 17.8 cm) long. Unlike some species of Erythrina, the leaves remain on the tree at flowering. Flowers, appearing near the top of the tree, are a brilliant orange-red color. The flowers are 3/4 to 1 1/4 in (19.1 to 31.8 mm) wide by 2 to 2 3/4 in (5.1 to 7.0 cm) long. Seed pods are 1/2 to 3/4 in (12.7 to 19.1 mm) wide by 3 to 5 in (7.6 to 12.7 cm) long and contain 2 to 3 dark brown seeds. Seeds are 1/4 to 1/3 in (6.4 to 8.5 mm) wide by 1/2 to 2/3 in (12.7 to 16.9 mm) long. It has small thorns, 1/25 to 1/12 in (1.0 to 2.0 mm) long on the trunk and branches.

Thorns are larger if the tree is stressed from lack of moisture. Propagation is by woody cuttings as 'Tropic Coral' will not always reproduce true to form from seed.

'Tropic Coral' was tested and developed primarily as a windbreak for soil and water conservation, protecting crops from wind damage, and planting around farmsteads. It is an excellent tree for use as an ornamental in landscaping and as a screen for privacy and light.

'Tropic Coral' is adapted to elevations ranging from sea level to 2,000 ft (610 m) in Hawaii; however, best success has been obtained from sea level to 1,000 ft (305 m). It will grow without supplemental irrigation in areas with annual rainfall in excess of 60 in (1524 mm). It may be grown in drier areas if irrigation is provided. It can be grown in a wide range of soils, from coarse to fine textured and from acid to alkaline conditions (pH range 4.5 to 7.5).

To maintain varietal purity, only asexual propagation of 'Tropic Coral' is recognized. Foundation quality plant materials of 'Tropic Coral' will be maintained by the Soil Conservation Services' Plant Materials Center, Hooilehua, Molokai, Hawaii. Cuttings are available to commercial producers and others for establishing their production rows. A mature specimen is available for inspection at Foster Botanic Garden, Honolulu Botanic Gardens, Honolulu, Hawaii.

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3/18/85

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